

GRANTHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year 1918.

CHARLES H. D. ROBBS,
B.A., (Oxon), M.B.,

Medical Officer of Health.

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CHARLES H. D. ROBBS, B.A.(Oxon), M.B.,
Medical Officer of Health.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Twelfth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the Rural District. The Local Government Board suggests that, as in the case of the three previous Annual Reports, this should be brief, and I shall therefore confine my remarks almost entirely to the Vital Statistics, and the incidence of infectious disease, together with some remarks on the Epidemic of Influenza which occurred towards the end of the year.

A summary of the Vital Statistics is given, the figures on which the numbers are calculated being supplied by the Registrar General.

Population - Census 1911	12,257
" - Estimated 1918 for Birth Rate	13,427
" - Estimated 1918 for Death Rate	11,982
Birth Rate per 1,000	18.5
Death Rate per 1,000	17.6
Death Rate of Infants under one year per 1,000	52.2
Average Birth Rate, England and Wales	17.7
Average Death Rate, England and Wales	17.6
Average Infantile Death Rate	97.

REMARKS ON THE VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of Births during the year was 249, and the number of deaths was 212.

The Birth Rate shows a slight increase on 1917, and the Death Rate is appreciably higher, rising from 12.35 to 17.6.

No one with experience of vital statistics would have been likely to prophecy at the beginning of the year that any area in which the birth rate exceeded the death rate for 1918 would have reasonable cause for satisfaction, but undoubtedly in view of the terrible scourge which has run riot through the land, such is the case. Some further remarks will be made concerning this epidemic at a later stage of this Report.

It is satisfactory to note that the Infantile Death Rate is very low, namely, 52 per 1000, only 13 children under the age of one year having died. In the year 1917, the Infantile Death Rate was 61, which was then the lowest on record. It is reasonable to suppose that the very satisfactory decrease in infantile mortality is to some extent due to the systematic visiting of mothers which has been well carried out during the last three years, and it is hardly necessary to add that a diminution of mortality amongst infants carries with it a bright prospect for the future.

The table of causes of death, apart from Influenza, contains no particular feature of importance.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

83 cases of Infectious Disease were notified during the year, viz:-

Measles	45
German Measles	3
Erysipelas	6
Scarlet Fever	11
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	5
Diphtheria	13
	--
	83.
	--

Measles was prevalent in the South part of the District in the Summer, particularly at South Witham. There were no fatal cases of this disease. Eleven cases of Scarlet Fever occurred, five being at Barrowby, but there was at no time any suggestion of an epidemic. There were thirteen cases of Diphtheria, not more than four cases in any one parish. The District has been very fortunate from the comparative immunity during the last three years from Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria. It has not been necessary to open the Isolation Hospital. The mortality from Infectious Diseases includes two deaths from Diphtheria and six from Tuberculosis.

INFLUENZA.

During the year, 61 deaths were recorded from Influenza in the district, and almost without exception these occurred in the last two months of the year, and formed thirty per cent of the whole number of deaths in the year.

This epidemic possessed features which entirely differentiate from others with which the medical practitioner has had knowledge.

In the first place, it was with few exceptions the most vigorous part of the community which was attacked, - children and young adults.

The second point was the profound gravity of the illness in so many cases, so that in only too many instances the patient, a few days before in vigorous health, was in a hopeless condition.

The third point was for the great tendency for the disease to attack the lungs.

In previous epidemics, the experience of a medical practitioner has been that influenza is usually not dangerous, and that it is more serious for the old people than the young, and that with due care, pulmonary complications can be avoided. It is at present only a matter of conjecture as to the reasons which differentiate this epidemic from all others. Highly sensational ones, such as the influence of "poison gas", can safely be put

aside, nor does there appear to be any reason to argue that the Epidemic was not really "Influenza." It seems clear that it was the disease we have known as Influenza, which for reasons unknown tended to assume a very ^{virulent} form.

It is a matter of experience that epidemics at different times vary greatly in severity of type, the season of the year being one cause, the health of the community in general being a second factor, and doubtless there are others which are at present unknown.

If it be assumed that in the month of November all the conditions, known and unknown, which influence the virulence of influenza, happened by some fortuitous coincidence to tend to the most severe type of illness, we have an hypothesis which makes an attempt to explain this disastrous calamity, and which, further, has the satisfactory feature that, as all these conditions have never been known to coincide before, it leads us to hope that it is very unlikely indeed that we shall ever have an epidemic of this type in the future.

The public had every facility for reading the advice given by the Local Government Board in the Circular on the precautions to be observed by those suffering from, and those in contact with the disease, and the nurses in the district gave what assistance they could to the patients.

Reports are appended of the work done by the Sanitary Inspector, and by his deputy during the period that he was absent on active service.

Yours faithfully,

C. H. D. ROBBS.

From January 1st to May 31st.

Nuisances dealt with:-Eight.

Drain, Chapel Yard, Great Gonerby.
" " " " "
" Spittlegate Cottages. Old Somerby.
" New Cottages, Aisby.
Overcrowding, Normanton, Cottage.
Dirty House, Aisby.
School Privies, Ropsley.
Drain, Gorse View, Harrowby Without.

Sewer Repairs carried out.

Oasby, main 9" sewer, opened and liberated.
Boothby Pagnell, 6" sewer opened, near Laundry.
Ancaster, a new 9" sewer recommended by Committee,
near Church Lane.
New manhole covers put in to Denton and South Witham
parishes.

New Works.

50 yards of 6" sewer laid in Bitchfield.
New manhole built, Pond Street, Great Gonerby.
New Syphon and Storm Overflow at Barrowby Sewerage Works.
New 4" house drain, 72 yards, Ropsley.
New 6" ditto, about 80 yards, Honington.
New 6" ditto to Corporation Sewer from Gorse
View, Harrowby Without, about 150 yards.

Water Supplies.

Welby Parish Pump taken up, repaired, and re-fixed.

Disinfecting.

Council School, Barrowby, in March, by instructions
from Medical Officer of Health.

Housing.

Report made as to recommendations for Building in the
District.
Inspection with Parish Council at Woolsthorpe for New
Cottages, and old dilapidated - at present
occupied.

Offensive Trades:

Knacker's License, Spittlegate Without, granted in
February, after inspection.
Knacker's License, Bourne Road, Colsterworth, granted
in February, after inspection.

Cowkeepers:

55 Registered Cowkeepers served with orders for cleansing in May.

Camps:

The local Military Camps and Aerodromes were officially inspected on 16 separate occasions, (during five months.)

May, 1919.

H. C. RUDKIN.

From June 1st to December 31st., 1919.

Total Number of Inspections made	-	158
Total Number of Notices served	-	13
(Informal 10, Statutory 3.)		
Pool, ditch, gutter, and watercourse: Nuisances abated		7
Animals improperly kept:-Nuisances abated		1
Drains, drain-traps, etc:-Nuisances abated		2
Slaughter-houses:-Number of inspections		9
Number of Houses inspected		22
Number of Schools inspected		2
Infectious diseases:-Houses disinfected		8
Disinfectants used:		
Carbolic Acid, Sulphur, Formalin.		
Water Supply:-Wells cleansed, repaired, etc.		1
Number of samples of water taken		2
Dairies, cowsheds, etc:-Number of inspections		14
Number of contraventions of the regulations		8
Legal proceedings taken		Nil

R. J. KETTLEBORROW,

Sanitary Inspector.

